Meeting the Challenge

Three-Year Business Plan

1994/95 - 1996/97

Alberta
EDUCATION

Education

Business Plan 1994-95 to 1996-97

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Message from the Minister

Ensuring access to a quality education for all Alberta students, even during a time of reduced spending, is the highest priority of the Alberta government.

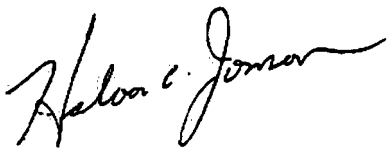
On January 17, 1994, Premier Ralph Klein announced a four-year reduction target for education of 12.4%, the lowest of the major spending departments and a clear indication of the government's priority on education. The following day I announced plans for a major restructuring of the education system to focus resources on students in the classroom, ensure more decision-making at the school level, lower administrative costs, and put in place a fair system of funding for education.

This three-year Business Plan provides direction for the future of education in Alberta. It is a plan for change that ensures Alberta students are well prepared for the world of work and for life-long learning, at a cost Albertans can afford. It reflects two years of discussions and consultations on the concerns and priorities for education in the years to come.

Albertans told us that a quality public education system, equity in funding among school jurisdictions, increased parental and school decision-making, improved results and accountability, fewer school boards, a focus on basic education, and reduced spending on administration were the key components in determining future directions for education in this province.

This plan reflects the priorities of Albertans. It demonstrates how we will ensure adequate funding for a quality education for all students, restructure our system to meet the changing needs of students in the classroom, and allow parents and schools more direction over the education of their students.

Yours sincerely,



Halvar C. Jonson
Minister of Education

Introduction

Quality education for our young people is key to maintaining Alberta's standard of living and ensuring our competitiveness in a global economy. Our education system must focus on what all students need to learn to participate successfully in an economy and a society that are undergoing fundamental changes. It is vital that we have the most efficient and cost-effective education system possible so that every available dollar is invested in quality education for students.

We can provide the quality education our students need despite reduced resources by restructuring the education system. This means setting a strong provincial direction for education, reducing layers of administration and allowing schools and their communities to make decisions that directly benefit their students.

Key to this restructuring is making sure that resources and authority are located where education happens – in the classroom and in the school. Parents, teachers and the community must have a meaningful role in decisions that affect students - decisions about policies, programs and allocation of resources. By making the system more efficient and accountable, savings can be redirected to the classroom.

Full provincial funding of public and separate schools is essential to supporting the fundamental changes outlined in this plan. It will ensure that our system is adequately and equitably funded, accountable and efficient. It will allow Alberta to maintain a quality education system which prepares all our young people for the future with the resources available.

This three-year business plan highlights the changes needed to build a system in which schools and businesses can work in partnership with parents and the community. Employing organizations of all kinds - businesses, government, not-for-profit agencies - will provide educational opportunities for students.

Effective measurement and reporting of outcomes are critical to improving the quality of education for our children. This plan includes the measures that will be used to assess our progress regularly and report to Albertans. The results will be used to take action to ensure we are achieving our goals.

The changes outlined in this plan will alter substantially the character of the education system and ensure a bright future for our students.

Summary of Three-Year Business Plan

Goals	Key Strategies (Examples)	Results
1. Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure high standards are established, communicated and achieved.	1. • Set high standards for education • Implement Career & Technology Studies, involving business in delivery	1. Alberta's learning standards meet the expectations of Albertans. Students achieve the standards in the provincial curriculum and perform well against national standards. Students receive the education they need for entry into the workplace and post-secondary studies.
2. Provide more choice of student programs and increase parental/community involvement in education.	2. • Open boundaries within and between school jurisdictions • Pilot Charter Schools	2. Parents have opportunities to choose schools/programs for their children. Business and the community have a meaningful role in education.
3. Improve the coordinated delivery of services for special needs children.	3. • Implement results of pilot coordination projects	3. Students with special needs have access to the services they require.
4. Improve teaching.	4. • Update teacher preparation and certification requirements • Establish competencies for beginning and experienced teachers	4. Teachers have the skills and knowledge required to help students learn. Teachers have the authority to make instructional decisions in the classroom.
5. Restructure the governance and delivery of education to achieve increased efficiencies and effectiveness.	5. • Amend legislation • School-based decision making • Reduce school boards to about 60 • Clarify role of schools and school boards • Increase use of technology to deliver education	5. School jurisdictions are effective and efficient.
6. Ensure that all school boards and schools are adequately and equitably funded.	6. • Full provincial funding of the public and separate schools • Phase in uniform provincial mill rates on property • Distribute funds to schools through school boards • Incentives to schools for student achievement	6. All students have equitable educational opportunities.
7. Reduce and restructure Alberta Education.	7. • Downsize Department 20% • Restructure Education • Recover costs and privatize some services	7. Education's operations are managed effectively and efficiently.
8. Ensure that the cost of education is reasonable and under control.	8. • Reduce school boards spending on administration and capital • Meet budget reduction targets • 1997 provincial education mill rates at or below 1993 averages	8. The cost of delivering education is reduced.
9. Establish a more accountable education system.	9. • Expand provincial testing programs • Provincial and local education performance measures • Value for money audits • School, jurisdiction and provincial reports on results to the public • Joint selection of superintendents • School jurisdiction business plans	9. The education system demonstrates greater accountability.

Spending Targets (in billions of dollars)

Year	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
Provincial Contribution:	$2.05	$2.09	$1.84	$1.79	$1.80

Mission and Mandate

Mission

"The best possible education for all Alberta students."

Mandate

Education is responsible for ensuring that students learn the skills and knowledge needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.

Basic Education - the Definition

The schools' first obligation is to provide a solid core program consisting of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Schools have the responsibility to provide instructional programs that ensure students will meet the provincial graduation requirements and are prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies. As well, schools must ensure that students understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and have the skills and disposition to pursue learning throughout life.

' earning Expectations

Schools will be accountable for their students' achievement of provincial learning standards including employability skills consistent with workplace requirements.

Schools will provide a variety of learning experiences so that students:

- Can read for information, understanding, and enjoyment;
- Write and speak clearly, accurately and appropriately for the context;
- Use mathematics to solve problems in business, science and daily-life situations;
- Understand the physical world, ecology and the diversity of life;
- Understand the scientific method and the societal context of science;
- Know the history and geography of Canada and have a general understanding of world history and geography;
- Understand Canada's political, social and economic systems in a global context;
- Can research an issue thoroughly;
- Know how to work independently and as part of a team;
- Respect the cultural diversity of Canada and appreciate literature and the arts;
- Know the basic requirements of an active, healthful lifestyle;
- Recognize the importance of accepting responsibility for their physical and emotional well-being and appreciate the role of the family and other relationships to that well-being;
- Manage time and other resources needed to complete a task;
  Use computer and communication technologies;
- Demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility, and persistence;
- Evaluate their own endeavors and continually strive to improve;
- Have the desire and realize the need for life-long learning.

Schools may also provide the opportunity for students to acquire a second language. When the primary language of instruction is not English, students must be able to demonstrate competence in reading and writing English.

Separate schools (Catholic and Protestant) may provide religious studies consistent with their constitutional guarantees.

Education Delivery

Schools must engage students in a variety of activities that enable them to acquire the expected learnings.

The expected learnings can be achieved in many ways: many students will require concrete, hands-on approaches to achieve the expected results. Schools may use any instructional technique acceptable to the community **so long as the results are achieved**. The school will have authority to deploy resources and determine how results are achieved. Schools and teachers are encouraged to take advantage of different delivery options such as distance education and workplace learning.

Senior high school students will be able to learn employability skills in the workplace. The school will provide support to ensure a broad theoretical understanding for those specific skills. The province will provide high school credit for workplace learning that is certified by the school and by the employer. This will ensure students have the skills demanded by business and gain recognized work experience to assist in making the transition from school to work.

Wherever possible, school programs and credit granting procedures will be redesigned to ensure compatibility with post-secondary and occupational training programs to improve the efficiency of the entire system by removing duplication.

Achievement Standards

Individual school results will vary but our total provincial system must be accountable for ensuring that a very high proportion of students are successful.

The province will define acceptable and excellence standards of student achievement. Business will be a key player in defining the specific learning requirements of industry. Schools, school jurisdictions and the province will audit and report on the full range of student learning.

The schools' primary responsibility is to ensure that students meet or exceed the standards defined by the provincial achievement assessments and graduation requirements. After consultation, the province will set specific targets for improving the proportion of students who meet the standards.

Spending Targets

In the Education Roundtables and the thousands of mail-in comments that followed, Albertans clearly stated their priority for a quality education for all Alberta students. At the same time, they also identified the need to restructure the education system to ensure that every available dollar is spent efficiently on meeting the needs of students.

A fundamental restructuring strategy of this plan is the full funding of the public and separate schools by the province. It will allow Education to meet the four-year spending target and yet maintain a quality education system. Full provincial funding will ensure adequate and equitable funding and improve cost control to make the system more responsive, efficient and effective.

Provincial General Revenue Spending Targets

- To meet the provincial spending target of $1.80 billion by 1996/97, a net reduction of $255 million (12.4%) must be made to the Education budget from the 1992/93 base.
- The provincial 1996/97 spending target has been adjusted slightly from the January 17, 1994 announcement to reflect changes required to account for capital debentures.
- Year by year consolidated spending targets for education:

Year	Spending	Yearly Changes	
		Percent %	Dollars $
1992-93	$2.05 billion	—	—
1993-94	$2.09 billion	1.8	37 million
1994-95	$1.84 billion	(12.2)	(251 million)
1995-96	$1.79 billion	(2.6)	(53 million)
1996-97	$1.80 billion	0.6	12 million
Total Reduction		(12.4%)	(255 million)

Budget targets over four years include:

- 20% ($11.6 million) reduction in Education and the Premier's Council
- changes in grants for a savings of $81 million in 1994/95
- grant rate reductions in 1994/95 and 1995/96
- no reduction in grants in 1996/97

Alberta School Foundation Fund

The provincial government will assume the full responsibility for the funding of education in the province. The Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF) is a new fund made up of a provincial contribution and a local contribution. It supports the operating expenditures and capital investment for education in public and separate schools.

Provincial Contribution

The provincial portion of the Alberta School Foundation Fund consists of funds from the General Revenues and a levy on non-residential properties (formerly the School Foundation Program Fund levy).

Local Contribution

The provincial government will take over responsibility for the local requisition from residential, farm and non-residential properties and reallocate the funds to schools through school boards. These tax revenues will be used only to support education in public and separate schools.

The estimated revenues from 1994-95 to 1996-97 from local residential, farm and commercial/ industrial properties based on the average 1993 adjusted equalized mill rate are:

	Residential & Farm Properties	Non-Residential Properties (in Millions of Dollars)	Total
1992-93	586	464	1,050
1993-94	612	484	1,097
1994-95*	624	495	1,119
1995-96*	624	495	1,119
1996-97*	624	495	1,119

*Estimated without assessment growth

Revenues that are generated from any growth in the assessment values will be used for education purposes only or rebated to the property tax payer after educational needs are met. The reporting onthe Alberta School Foundation Fund will be open and consistent with the requirements of the Auditor General.

Other Programs (not funded from Alberta School Foundation Fund)

Funds from General Revenues also provide other specific and limited support for programs such as Private Schools and Early Childhood Services.

New Funding Framework

A funding framework will be implemented to fund schools on an equitable basis that recognizes the number of students that are served, the programs they need and cost differences due to the special characteristics of certain school jurisdictions.

Over the next few years, uniform provincial mill rates, one for residential and farm property and one for non-residential property, will be phased in. Overall, the restructuring of the system will allow savings to be redirected to the classroom so that the system can offer quality education to all students at a cost Albertans can afford.

Goals and Strategies for Education

1. **Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure high standards are established, communicated and achieved.**

- Establish and communicate clear learning outcomes and high standards
- Eliminate duplication and repetition in curriculum development
- Implement Career and Technology Studies, involving business in the delivery of some skills programs
- Streamline the curriculum development process and reduce the frequency of changes

2. **Provide more choice of student programs and increase parental/community involvement in education.**

- Enable parents and teachers to have a meaningful role in decisions about policies, programs, budgets, and activities
- Encourage increased parental involvement in their children's learning
- Remove local attendance boundaries within and between public and separate school jurisdictions
- Pilot Charter Schools

3. **Improve the coordinated delivery of services for special needs children.**

Implement results of pilot projects which support student learning by coordinating services for children with special needs and families among provincial departments, local and not-for-profit agencies throughout the province

4. **Improve teaching.**

- Update teacher preparation and certification requirements
- Establish competencies for beginning and experienced teachers

5. **Restructure the governance and delivery of education to achieve increased efficiencies and effectiveness.**

- Revise legislation to restructure the education system
- Establish school-based budget and program decision-making, including staff development
- Reduce the number of school boards from 141 to about 60 through amalgamation and regionalization
- Reduce the duplication of student testing by school boards and decentralize the marking of provincial assessments
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Education, school boards, superintendents and schools
- Implement new Francophone governance structure
- Achieve cost reductions through joint delivery of services among school jurisdiction and other local agencies (e.g. public and separate boards/municipalities/health boards)
- Reduce the duplication between secondary and post-secondary institutions and programs
- Increase access to education programs through use of distance learning technologies and television

6. Ensure that all school boards and schools are adequately and equitably funded.

- Province assumes responsibility for the requisitioning and distribution of education property taxes
- Phase in uniform provincial mill rates
- Implement a new provincial funding framework that ensures equity, efficient and effective practices, and provision of programs and services at least cost
- Provide adequate funding to school boards for distribution to schools
- Phase-in incentives to schools to recognize student performance

7. Reduce and restructure Alberta Education.

- Downsize Education by 20% from 1992/93 base, increase productivity and clarify functions
- Achieve efficiencies (budget preparation, curriculum development, technology purchase process, integrate automated financial, course and student data systems, contracting out services)
- Increase cost recovery on selected Department services (e.g. transcripts and distance learning; marketing programs and student assessment instruments)
- Restructure or privatize operations as appropriate (e.g. the warehousing operations of the Learning Resource Distributing Centre)
- Consider operating the Correspondence School section of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre as a Charter School
- Reward Department staff for innovations and productivity improvements

8. Ensure that the cost of education is reasonable and under control.

- Meet the budget reduction target of $255 million (12.4%) established by government by 1996/97
- Limit school board spending on administration and capital
- Control expenditures to keep 1997 provincial education mill rates at or below the 1993 weighted averages

9. Establish a more accountable education system.

- Expand the provincial achievement testing program to test Grade 3 students in reading, writing and math skills, and to test Grade 6 and 9 students in the four core subjects each year
- Develop diploma examinations in Math 33 and Social Studies 33
- Require school jurisdictions to develop business plans and report publicly on salaries and administrative costs
- Use provincial and local performance measures to assess and report regularly on the effectiveness of Alberta's education system
- Conduct value for money audits and comprehensive management reviews of schools and school systems
- Require school jurisdictions to report on designated indicators to Education and the public
- Provide information to the public on the performance and cost of the education system
- Establish joint responsibility of school boards and Education for selecting school superintendents

Three-Year Business Plan Schedule for Restructuring Education

Selected Key Strategies	Fiscal Years		
	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
Goal 1 **Set High Standards for Education**			
◆ Clear learning outcomes and high standards for core subjects are completed and communicated			X
◆ Career and Technology Studies, involving business in delivery, implemented			X
Goal 2 **Provide More Choice and Increase Parental Involvement**			
◆ Local attendance boundaries removed			X
◆ Charter schools piloted		X	
Goal 3 **Improve Coordination of Services for Special Needs Children**			
◆ Recommendations from pilot projects implemented		X	
Goal 4 **Improve Teaching**			
◆ Teacher certification requirements updated		X	
◆ Competencies for beginning and experienced teachers established			X
Goal 5 **Restructure Education System**			
◆ Legislation to restructure education enacted	X		
◆ Site-based management implemented			X
◆ Number of school boards reduced to about 60		X	
◆ Roles and responsibilities of schools, school boards and the Department clarified	X		
◆ Francophone governance implemented	X		
Goal 6 **Ensure Equitable and Adequate Funding**			
◆ Provincial requisition and distribution of education property taxes	X		
◆ Uniform provincial mill rates			X
◆ New provincial funding framework implemented		X	
◆ Funding distributed to schools through school boards		X	
◆ Incentives to schools to recognize student achievement		X	
Goal 7 **Reduce and Restructure Education**			
◆ Education reorganized and downsized 20%		X	
◆ Cost recovery of Department services increased		X	
Goal 8 **Cost of Education is Reasonable and Under Control**			
◆ Budget reduction target of $255 million met			X
◆ School board spending on administration and capital reduced	X		
◆ The provincial education mill rates are at or below the 1993 averages			X
Goal 9 **More Accountable Education System**			
◆ Provincial assessment program expanded		X	
◆ Value for money audits fully implemented			X
◆ School and board public reports on designated measures initiated		X	
◆ Joint selection of school superintendents by the province completed			X
◆ School jurisdiction business plans required		X	

Implications

Overall Impact on Department Size and Functions

- Education will focus on:
  - Planning, Policy and Education System Performance Measures
  - Curriculum Standards
  - Funding
  - Evaluating, Auditing and Ensuring Compliance
  - Communications
  - Supporting the Delivery of Education Programs and Services
- Education will have reduced staff and operational resources, continuing a long-term reduction in Department size and functions. The staff complement will be reduced by about 170 positions making the department smaller than in 1971-72.
- Regional offices will be phased out.
- Education will no longer fund adult basic education.
- Direct delivery of programs and services will be reduced.

Transfers and Privatization

- The warehousing operations of the Learning Resources Distributing Centre will be restructured or privatized.
- Operating the Correspondence School section of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre as a charter school will be considered.
- Service delivery by Education to jurisdictions will be reduced.
- Teacher in-service is the shared responsibility of school jurisdictions, schools, and teachers.

Cost Recovery

- New or increased fees will be charged for services such as providing student transcripts and distance learning courses.
- Marketing Education's curriculum and student assessment materials will be pursued.

Cost and Quality Control

- Full provincial funding ensures both public and separate school students have similar educational opportunities regardless of where they live.
- Cost control measures such as value for money audits and limits on administration spending will be implemented.
- Education will assist in coordinating the development and implementation of province-wide technical standards for computer systems, hardware and software with school boards.

Relationships

- Full provincial funding of education, reducing the number of school jurisdictions, and joint selection of superintendents will forge a stronger, more accountable partnership among the Department, school boards and schools.
- Legislation to revise the School Act to restructure the education system will be introduced in the Spring 1994 Session.
- School and school jurisdiction reporting will be more focused and consistent with Department and Auditor General requirements.
- Schools will benefit from the savings resulting from decreased spending on school jurisdiction administration.
- Schools will have greater authority and responsibility for the educational program and are more accountable for results.
- Departments such as Education, Advanced Education and Career Development, Health, Family and Social Services and Justice will find ways to share resources and integrate services and programs with those of local governments, agencies, and schools.
- Piloting Charter Schools will allow the development of innovative alternatives within the public school system.
- Overlap and duplications between secondary and post-secondary education programs will be reduced.

Results and Performance Measures

Selected measures will be used to assess the achievement of key results and ensure restructuring is enhancing school-based decision-making as well as strengthening provincial cost and quality control.

Achievement of these results will be reported in the Province's annual report on educational performance. Other studies may be required to supplement the annual results report. In addition, school jurisdictions and schools will be required to use designated measures and report annually on student achievement and on school and jurisdiction performance.

Goal 1

Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure high standards are established, communicated and achieved.

Result

Alberta's learning standards meet the expectations of Albertans.

Measures

- Percent of Albertans who are satisfied with the Province's learning expectations and standards
- Satisfaction of employers, post-secondary institutions, and Albertans with high school graduation requirements
- Assessment of Alberta learning standards by a third party
- Comparison of Alberta curriculum learning expectations and standards with those in other provinces and countries

Result

Students achieve the standards in the provincial curriculum.

Measures

- Percent of grade 9 students who graduate from academic and occupational courses/programs in four years
- Percent of students who achieve an acceptable or higher standard on provincial achievement tests and/or diploma exam courses
- Number of high school students who receive Rutherford scholarships

Result

Students receive the education they need to prepare them for entry into the workplace and post-secondary studies.

Measures

- Percent of students, parents, employers, post-secondary instructors and the public who are satisfied with preparation of students for the workplace or post-secondary education

Result

Alberta students perform favorably compared to students outside the province.

Measures

- Performance of Alberta students in selected subjects compared to students in other provinces and countries

Goal 2

Provide more choice of student programs and increase parental/community involvement in education.

Result

Parents have opportunities to choose schools and programs for their children within the public education system.

Business and the community have a meaningful role in education.

Measures

- Percent of parents who are satisfied with their children's schools
- Number of school jurisdictions where students may choose local school
- Number of employing organizations (e.g., business, industry) who are offering educational opportunities to students
- Percent of parents, businesses, and community representatives who are satisfied with their role in decision making

oal 3

Improve the coordinated delivery of services for special needs children.

Result

Students with special needs have access to the services they require.

Measures

- Percent of Albertans who are satisfied with accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of programs and services for at-risk and special needs students

Goal 4

Improve teaching.

Result

Teachers have the skills and knowledge required to help students learn.

Teachers have the authority to make instructional decisions in the classroom.

Measures

- Percent of teachers whose assignment matches their areas of specialization
- Percent of teachers who are satisfied:
  - they have the skills and knowledge required in the classroom,
  - with their authority to make instructional decisions, and
  - with services to support their teaching

Goal 5

Restructure the governance and delivery of education to achieve increased efficiencies and effectiveness.

Result

School jurisdictions and schools are effective and efficient.

Measures

- Percentage of instructional expenditures compared to other expenditures (e.g., administration)
- Relationship of instructional costs to instructional results
- Percent of students who are satisfied with:
  - the assistance, support and encouragement they receive from school staff, and
  - the recognition they receive from schools for their educational achievements

Goal 6

Ensure that all school boards and schools are adequately and equitably funded.

Result

All students have equitable educational opportunities.

Measures

- Number and type of course and program offerings by school and school jurisdiction
- Differences in per pupil expenditures by school and school jurisdiction

Goal 7

Reduce and restructure Education.

Result

Education's operations are managed effectively and efficiently.

Measures

- Percent of Department's clients who are satisfied with the services provided by the Department
- Percent reduction in Education's budget and staffing levels
- Reduction in the cost per unit of Department services (e.g. diploma exams)
- Percent of Albertans who are satisfied that the Department uses all education revenues efficiently and effectively for education purposes

Goal 8

Ensure that the cost of education is reasonable and under control.

Result

The cost of delivering education is reduced.

Measures

- Percentage reduction in cost per student per school day (from 1992-93)
- Interprovincial comparisons:
  - per pupil expenditures
  - per capita expenditures
- Percent of parents who are satisfied that they are receiving value for their tax dollars in their schools
- School construction costs per square metre compared to the construction of similar buildings

Goal 9

Establish a more accountable education system.

Result

The education system demonstrates greater accountability.

Measures

Percent of Albertans who are satisfied with access to and effectiveness of information about the education system's performance from the province, school jurisdictions and schools

- Percent of parents who are satisfied with information they receive from schools about their children's educational achievement

Roles and Responsibilities of Schools, School Boards and the Department of Education

Discussion Framework

Key to restructuring education is effective school-based decision-making. To achieve this, a number of actions are required, including a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various levels in the education system. The following outlines a framework to guide this discussion.

Schools

It is vital that resources and authority are located where education happens - in the classroom, school and related learning environments. This is necessary for schools to fulfill the roles delegated by the Minister of Education and school boards.

The principal is the key educational leader in fostering successful school-based decision-making. Under the principal's leadership, the role of schools includes:

- following the provincial Program of Studies
- maintaining a positive learning environment for students
- providing opportunities to work closely with community and business to improve learning experiences and provide educational opportunities
- working with parents, teachers and members of the community:
  - to establish a school-based management system with significant community involvement
  - to develop school plans, policies, budgets
  - to establish the scope of the school program and extra-curricular activities
- providing teachers with the freedom to teach so that teachers can apply their expertise and experience most effectively
- planning for in-service and professional development of staff
- working to enhance learning with the application of technology
- meeting provincial achievement and performance standards
- reporting school results to the community
- informing parents of their children's progress in achieving provincial standards
- maintaining student records
- using the school-based budget to deploy the resources necessary to improve the education provided for all children
- preparing school plans and budgets, and using financial and human resources efficiently and effectively
- managing the facilities and equipment effectively

School Boards

School boards fulfill the authority and responsibility delegated by the province. The role of school boards is to:

- ensure schools provide an education program for each student consistent with the requirements of the School Act
- ensure adherence to the Program of Studies within the local context
- ensure a school-community based management system is in place which allows for community involvement and participation in the school
- implement systems of evaluation of students, teachers, schools, and programs consistent with provincial policy
- establish clear measures of performance linked to provincial standards to assess student achievement
- report to parents and taxpayers on the achievement of students and the performance of the school system
- establish policies respecting the provision of educational services and programs
- employ necessary staff including principals and teachers, in accordance with provincial qualifications for superintendents, principals and teachers
- work with the superintendent to achieve continuous improvement
- work cooperatively with other jurisdictions and community agencies to obtain efficient use of services, facilities, equipment and other resources
  work with the province in the selection of school superintendents
  develop jurisdiction business plans
- establish annual jurisdiction budgets and distribute funds to schools
- enter into agreements with other parties with regard to the provision of educational services
- establish policies and procedures regarding all aspects of operations
- operate and maintain a student transportation system
- maintain buildings and facilities

Department of Education

The Department of Education fulfills the constitutional responsibility for education. It provides leadership for the changes to governance, funding and delivery of education in the Province of Alberta. The Department's role is to:

- carry out the policy directions of the provincial government and Minister of Education
- establish clear provincial policy direction, goals, standards and measurements
- establish and communicate clear learning expectations and standards
- work with other provinces to establish national standards and transferability of programs
- conduct on-going assessments and evaluation of students and the education system
- report to the public on student achievement and the performance of the education system
  coordinate with other departments the delivery of services for children
- establish provincial partnerships with other partners in education, business and the community
- deliver provincially based services, e.g. distance learning

- work with school boards in the selection of superintendents
- allocate funds to schools through school boards in a fair and equitable manner
- develop provincial education business plan
- report to government and the public on the achievement of the goals in the business plan
- ensure that adequate financial management, auditing and reporting procedures are in place
- implement and maintain legislation
- advise school boards, school councils, parents
- deal with appeals and disputes
- establish plans and priorities for capital projects

Appendix 1 Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Business Plan 1994-95 to 1996-97

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Mission

To enhance and promote the opportunity for full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the province.

Goals

Ownership, by all Albertans, of the vision and principles outlined in *Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta.*

Sound policy framework and guiding principles to ensure that generic public policy is inclusive of the rights of Albertans with disabilities.

Implementation of changes and/or improvements in public policies which will remove barriers preventing Albertans with disabilities from being socially and economically integrated into their communities.

By 1998 when the Council's sunset clause takes effect, a government with well developed mechanisms which ensure the ongoing input of Albertans with disabilities into relevant public policy.

Objectives

Personal Supports: A comprehensive personal supports program that is capable of meeting the support needs of persons with disabilities, regardless of their age or stage of life.

Education: Achieve a provincial policy of "inclusive education" for children with disabilities, in their neighbourhood school.

Training: Through a more focused and aggressive policy on training and post-secondary education, improve the educational level of Albertans with disabilities to closely approximate the general population.

Employment: To increase the labour force participation rate and the employment rate of persons with disabilities to more closely approximate that of the general population.

Recreation: Full accessibility to all publicly funded recreation facilities and leisure pursuits by the year 2000.

Transportation: Barrier free transportation systems within the province that meet transportation needs for local and intraprovincial travel, as well as barrier free pedestrian environments within municipalities, by the year 2000.

Housing: Access to the same range of accessible and affordable housing options that other Albertans accept as their right.

Information: A province wide disability-related information network to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, their families and other stakeholders.

Strategies

The key strategies and the timeframes are documented in the 55 recommendations contained in the Premier's Council *Action Plan, Spring 1990.* These recommendations resulted from an 18 month consultation and review process which addressed the barriers preventing Albertans with disabilities from achieving the objectives outlined above.

Three-Year Financial Plan

The Premier's Council has made significant strides towards its goals during the first 5 years of its 10 year mandate. The Council has appreciated the allocation by government of appropriate resources, enabling us to get the work done. We believe the next three years will be particularly challenging. However, we believe the Council must continue to provide government with advice and input, particularly as it strives to manage the deficit reduction process. To do this the Council has had to review and repriorize its objectives and strategies over the next three years as follows.

Objectives

While the Mission, Goals, and Objectives of our council will remain the same, the budget reduction process will require us to rethink our strategies. *Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta* has received significant support from both government and the community. The development of the *Action Plan* and our efforts to garner support for its implementation consumed an enormous amount of staff time and consulting resources. The subsequent supplementary reports, including *Alternative Communications: Issues and Strategies for People with Alternate Communications Needs* and *Removing Barriers: An Action Plan for Aboriginal People with Disabilities* have been completed and the report for standards in educational interpreting in a mainstream setting is well underway. All will form the basis for policy review and changes for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, over the next 3 years, Council will focus on the following objectives:

1. Renewed commitment from government for continued implementation of the recommendations in the *Action Plan* and supplementary policy documents.

2. Establishment and/or refinement of mechanisms in relevant government departments to ensure an ongoing source of advice and input on programs and services affecting Albertans with disabilities which might eventually replace the role of the Premier's Council.

3. Full implementation of the Council's recommendation regarding the establishment of a comprehensive Community Supports Program to focus government's commitment to providing Albertans with the necessary personal and technical supports required to be socially and economically integrated in their communities.

4. Establishment of a comprehensive disability information network called "ENABLEbase".

To achieve these objectives within the context of significant budget reductions, the Council will embark on a number of strategies which are summarized as follows:

Strategies

- Focus for Council staff will be to collaborate with and assist departments in continued implementation of the Action Plan recommendations, particularly in the development and implementation of the Community Supports Program.
- Increased collaboration with line departments and use of line department resources in consultation and policy review.
- Increased financial support for the Alberta Information Network project in 1994 and 1995 with the understanding that the project will evolve into a self-sustaining organization within three years.
- No change in structure or staffing of the Council.
- Continued freeze on staff salaries.
- Reduction in use of outside consulting services, especially Professional, Technical and Labour services.
- Reduction in total spending from $680,000 in 1993/94 to $596,000 in 1996/97.

Spending Targets

- 20% targeted reduction will be achieved in 1994/95 fiscal year.
- Total budget will remain flat at $596,000 through 1996/97.

Description	Actual 1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Total Budget	745,222	700,000	596,000	596,000	596,000